

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 OC-06 CCO-00 SSO-00 SS-15 A-01
PA-01 INR-10 INRE-00 SP-02 CIAE-00 /048 W
-----111271 301610Z /41
O 301550Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3826

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 15307

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: APOU, PINT, SOPN, UR
SUBJECT: MFA COMPLAINT ON CORRESPONDENT'S USE OF POUCH
REF: (A) MOSCOW 14999, (B) MOSCOW 13510

1. PRESS AND CULTURAL COUNSELOR HAD LONG DISCUSSION WITH
SHIPLER JUNE 28 RE ALLEGATIONS ON USE OF POUCH RAISED BY
MFA SAME DAY (AND REPORTED REF A). P&C COUNSELOR NOTED
THAT EMBASSY HAS NO INDEPENDENT INFORMATION TO CORROBOR-
ATE MFA VERSION, SINCE ONLY "PROOF" WE POSSESS IS COPY
OF SOVIET PROTOCOL. XEROX OF MAILING LABEL SHOWN TO
EMBOFFS BY KRYLOV DURING MEETING AT MFA COULD, OF
COURSE, BE COPY OF ANY ENVELOPE FROM SHIPLER'S HOME
OFFICE.

2. SHIPLER, RECOUNTING EARLIER APPROACH BY MILITIA
(REF B), SAID HE WAS NOT RPT NOT CONTEMPLATING A VISIT
TO 17TH DISTRICT STATION HOUSE AND THAT HE WAS NOT
AWARE OF ANY MAIL WHICH, ONCE IN HIS POSSESSION, HAD
MYSTERIOUSLY DISAPPEARED. (COMMENT: WE STILL FIND IT
PUZZLING HOW "PACKET", IF GENUINE, CAME INTO POSSESSION
OF SOVIETS; POSSIBILITY THAT IT WAS FILCHED FROM EMBASSY
BEFORE IT GOT TO SHIPLER IS REMOTE BUT CANNOT BE ENTIRELY
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DISCOUNTED.)

3. AFTER P&C COUNSELOR RECOUNTED SUBSTANCE OF SOVIET
CHARGES, SHIPLER, WHO IN PAST HAS BEEN ONE OF MOST
VOCAL DEFENDERS OF NEWSMEN'S "RIGHT" TO USE POUCH, DE-
LIVERED HIMSELF OF SURPRISINGLY MODERATE AND THOUGHT-
PROVOKING PRESENTATION ON PROBLEMS LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS

ARE FACING, WITH INFLUX OF UNSOLICITED MATERIALS SOVIET GOVERNMENT WOULD FIND OBJECTIONABLE. SHIPLER SAYS HE AND MANY OF HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE WRITTEN DIRECTLY TO SOURCES OF SUCH MATERIALS REQUESTING THAT THEY NOT BE SENT. THERE HAS BEEN SOME SUCCESS. "DIRECT MAILINGS" ARE DOWN. ADDITIONALLY, SINCE EMBASSY REGULATIONS ON USE OF POUCH PRIVILEGE WERE MODIFIED LAST DECEMBER, PACKAGES RECEIVED HERE FOR NEWSMEN (AS WELL AS EDUCATIONAL AND SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGEES AND BUSINESSMEN) MUST ORIGINATE WITH THEIR HOME OFFICES ONLY - THUS PRESUMABLY FILTERING OUT THE UNSOLICITED ITEMS WITH DIFFERING RETURN ADDRESSES. HOWEVER, MOST OF LOCAL CORRESPONDENTS HAVE ARRANGEMENTS WITH THEIR HOME OFFICES TO FORWARD PERSONAL MAIL (BANK STATEMENTS AND THE LIKE) AND IT NOW APPEARS, SHIPLER INDICATED, THAT MANY OF THE SOURCES OF UNSOLICITED MATERIAL HAVE CAUGHT ONTO THIS FACT AND ARE SENDING THEIR STUFF TO HOME OFFICES WITH A REQUEST TO FORWARD. HOME OFFICES, PRESUMABLY IN PURELY MECHANICAL PROCESS BY LOW-LEVEL EMPLOYEES, REGULARLY WRAP UP ACCUMULATED MAIL AND FORWARD TO MOSCOW VIA HELSINKI BOX M ADDRESS, MEETING OUR POUCH REQUIREMENTS BY HAVING CORRECT RETURN ADDRESS (I.E. THAT OF SPONSORING ORGANIZATION). IN MANY CASES, ORGANIZATIONS OR INDIVIDUALS TO WHICH CORRESPONDENTS HAD DIRECTLY APPEALED TO CEASE MAILINGS HAVE SIMPLY SWITCHED TACTICS, STOPPING DIRECT CORRESPONDENCE BUT USING THE CHANNEL VIA CORRESPONDENT'S CONFIDENTIAL

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HOME OFFICE. SINCE CORRESPONDENTS ARE NOT PERSONALLY ACQUAINTED WITH MANY SOURCES OF MATERIALS, FOR WHOM THEY ARE JUST CONVENIENT TRANSMISSION BELT, EVEN DIRECT APPEALS TO CEASE MAILINGS HAVE OFTEN BEEN INEFFECTIVE. SOURCES, INCLUDING RECENT EMIGRES, MERELY CONTINUE TO SEND THEIR ITEMS OFF TO AN UNCERTAIN WELCOME WITH PRESUMED HOPE THAT AT LEAST SOME WILL MAKE IT INTO HANDS OF INTENDED OR RANDOM SOVIET RECIPIENTS.

4. AT CONCLUSION OF MEETING, SHIPLER ASKED P&C COUNSELOR TO KEEP SUBSTANCE OF THIS DISCUSSION CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT TO MENTION IT TO OTHER LOCAL NEWSMEN. THIS OF COURSE WE WILL DO, AND WE ASK THAT DEPARTMENT DO LIKEWISE.

5. COMMENT: THIS EPISODE HAS LED US TO GIVE FURTHER THOUGHT TO PRESENT POUCH REGULATIONS AND THEIR EFFECTIVENESS, AND TO WAYS IN WHICH WE MIGHT MINIMIZE POSSIBILITY OF UNDETECTABLE VIOLATIONS SUCH AS THOSE SHIPLER DESCRIBES. SINCE POUCH PRESENTS SOLE RELIABLE MEANS FOR NEWSMEN, BUSINESSMEN AND EXCHANGEES TO COMMUNICATE WITH OUTSIDE WORLD, ISSUE PRESENTS US WITH PARTICULARLY THORNY QUESTION OF LIMITING MISUSE WITHOUT PENALIZING INNOCENT PARTIES. ONCE WE HAVE COMPLETED OUR REVIEW

AND COME TO SOME TENTATIVE CONCLUSIONS, WE WILL TRANSMIT
THEM TO DEPARTMENT'S ATTENTION. TOON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: ALLEGATIONS, PUBLIC CORRESPONDENCE, DIPLOMATIC COMMUNICATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 30 jun 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MOSCOW15307
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780271-0008
Format: TEL
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t1978063/aaaaackx.tel
Line Count: 118
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 4a233a83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 78 MOSCOW 14999, 78 MOSCOW 13510
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 20 may 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2243696
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MFA COMPLAINT ON CORRESPONDENT'S USE OF POUCH
TAGS: APOU, PINT, SOPN, UR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/4a233a83-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014